

Sister Ann Irene Wackenheim

Born: November 9, 1914

Professed: August 10, 1938

Entered into Life: December 24, 2011

Verse on her memorial card: *"Do not fear for I am with you."* Isaiah 41:10



December 26, 2011

Sister Ann Irene Wackenheim, the daughter of Aloysius and Elizabeth Poehling Wackenheim was born on November 9, 1914, and baptized with the name of Irene at St. Anthony of Padua Church in St. Louis on November 13. She was the fifth of six children, including our Sr. Ann Catherine, Sr. Anne Bernadine, CSJ; Fr. Apollinaris, OFM; and Fr. Fidelis, OFM. She is survived by one sister Ann Atteln and nieces Anita Selley of Imperial, Barbara Atteln of St. Louis, Missouri, and Mary Ann Finch of California.

Sr. Ann Irene entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood on August 25, 1935; she entered the Novitiate on July 25, 1936, and professed first vows on August 10, 1938. She received a bachelor's degree in Mathematics from Quincy College on June 1, 1950; a master's degree in Education from St. Louis University on June 1, 1957; and a master's degree in Library Science from Rosary College in Illinois, on June 1, 1962. In addition, she held a Nebraska Professional Secondary School Certificate; from the University of Missouri accreditation for Typing, General Business and Clerical Office Practice, and a Librarian's Professional Life Certificate from the Missouri Library Association.

Sr. Ann Irene was a person of quiet dedication and peaceful presence. This season of Advent has been a special time of quiet waiting as her heart weakened. However, her joy in all the small attentions from her devoted nieces and the Villa Theresa Haven staff was always evident in her beautiful smile. Her words were not many and always softly spoken but her gratitude for any kindness lighted up her face. How fitting that she was called home at 11:45 p.m. on December 24 as we gathered to celebrate the birth of our Prince of Peace! What joy there would have been in heaven!

Sr. Ann Irene ministered in several elementary schools: St. Peter in Quincy, Illinois; St. James in Crete, Nebraska; Ascension in Chesterfield, St. Mary in Conception, and St. Henry in Charleston, Missouri; and St. Monica in St. Louis. She then taught at St. Henry High School in Charleston, Missouri, and St. Joseph High School in Omaha, Nebraska, but her longest service was at her beloved St. Elizabeth Academy in St. Louis, Missouri, where she served as accountant, teacher and librarian from 1959 to 1990. Throughout her seventy years of ministry, when a need arose she was willing to step in, getting the preparation required and serving generously.

Sr. Miriam Joseph, in a letter dated July 11, 1977, expressed the sentiments of so many of us who are grateful for all that Sr. Ann Irene contributed to our mission with her dedicated but often unseen service: *“We are not only grateful for what you have done in the business office, but also in the many, many other areas of St. Elizabeth Academy... May God reward you for all you have done and continue to do for all of us – for all you are doing for God’s glory!”*

From 1990 through 2001 she offered her talents as seamstress, coupon clipper, and keeper of the doors. Some of the special coupons provided treats for the Sisters. The Sisters remember that her hands were always busy especially as she made her stuffed dogs, calico cats, and other menagerie, often with the help of her sister Ann, her brother-in-law and their daughters. “A few minutes of my time here and there seem to give such joy to others.”

In 2001 Sr. Ann Irene came to St. Joseph Retirement Community in O’Fallon, where she continued to sew her “puppies” to the delight of the Sisters and many children as long as she was able. In her later years she entered fully into her ministry of prayer and presence as she encouraged those who came to visit and those who tended to her needs. We have been blessed with her gentle spirit and now we return her to God with deep gratitude.

Sr. Ann Irene’s body will be brought back to St. Joseph Chapel on Wednesday, December 28, at 3:30 p.m., and we will gather there for a Prayer Service of Thanksgiving at 7:00 p.m. The Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Thursday, December 29, at 11:00 a.m.

During these Christmas days we recall how great is the glory of God who invites us to be part of the Christmas mystery. John the Monk, 8th century writer, in his “Hymn of the Nativity” writes: *“Heaven and earth are united today, for Christ is born! Today God has come upon the earth, and humankind gone up to heaven. Today in Bethlehem, I hear the angels: ‘Glory to God in the highest!’”*

Peace be with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Ellen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Ellen Orf
Council Member